



"Immediacy": Unselfconscious Being

Being, Essence and Notion

The three divisions of the Logic

Lenin wrote: *"It is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital... without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic."* Our mission, given by Lenin, is therefore to thoroughly study and understand the whole of Hegel's Logic.

We soon find that there are actually two Logics: [The Shorter Logic](#), and [The Science of Logic](#); but they are similar, and are both divided by three main headings: **Being, Essence and Notion.**

This time we are going to reverse the order and take Andy Blunden's lecture as the main item, simply because Andy has

done a great job.

There is a movement from Being, through Essence, to Notion. This is not to deny the importance of the argument and the detail, but to say that what distinguishes Hegel's Logic is that it shows how things develop from nothing to something. It is not a static philosophy of positions and definitions. Nor is it an owners' manual for the mind. It is a science of creation, and development. The beginning is Being, which is "immediate", with as yet no past and no future. Hence our illustration of the unselfconscious puppy-dog, above.

The following are extracts from Andy Blunden's lecture, finishing with a reference back to Marx's Capital, that may assist readers to get a quick overview of Andy's overview of Hegel's "Logic":

"I should mention here as an aside that all Hegel's major works have the same structure: he identifies the simple concept or notion which marks the unconditioned starting point for the given science, and then he applies the method, the model for which is given in the Logic, in order to elaborate what is implicit in the given concept; he develops 'the peculiar internal development of the thing itself.'

"So, the Logic begins with a critique of Being, what is contained in the concept of 'Being'. The Logic is really the study of concepts; so, the Concept is the truth of Being, whilst Being is the Concept still 'in itself'. The Third Book

of the Logic is the Doctrine of the Notion (or Concept which is same thing), that is, the Concept for itself. But in the Doctrine of Being, the Concept is still just 'in itself'.

"If there is to be some thing amidst the infinite coming and going, the chaos of existence, the simplest actual thing that can be is a Quality, something that persists amidst change. And if we ask what it is that changes while it remains of the same quality, what changes when the thing still remains what it is, then this is what we call Quantity. But a thing cannot indefinitely undergo quantitative change and remain still what it is, retain the same quality; at some point, a quantitative change amounts to a change in Quality, and this Quantitative change which amounts to a Qualitative change, the unity of Quality and Quantity, we call the Measure of the thing.

"Thus there are three grades of Being: Quality, Quantity and Measure. We apply these categories to things that we regard as objects, the business of the positivist sociologist, the observer. Even a participant in a not yet emergent social change or sociological category, has to play the role of sociologist to be conscious of it.

"Essence is reflection... When people reflect on things, they do so only with the aid of what they already know. So reflection is a good term. It is new Being, reflected in the mirror of old concepts. It's like what Marx was talking about in the "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis

Bonaparte”:

‘The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as they seem to be occupied with revolutionizing themselves and things, creating something that did not exist before, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honoured disguise and borrowed language.’ (18th Brumaire, I)

“The third part of the Logic is the Doctrine of the Notion. Notion is a translation of the German word Begriff which is also translated as ‘concept’.

“The Doctrine of the Notion begins with an abstract notion, and the process of the Notion is that it gets more and more concrete.

“The first section of the Notion is Subjectivity, or the Subject. And here for the first time we get a glimpse of Hegel’s conception of the subject: it is not an individual person in any sense at all, but a simple element of consciousness arising from social practices which implicate the whole community, reflected in language, the whole social division of labour and so on.

“The process of the Doctrine of the Notion is the abstract

notion becoming more and more concrete. This process of concretization takes place through objectification of subjectivity, that is, through the subject-object relation. The first thing to grasp about the Object, which is the second division of the Doctrine of the Notion, is that the Object may be other Subjects, Subjects which are Objects in relation to the Subject or Subjects which have become thoroughly objectified. Objectification is not limited to the construction of material objects or texts; it's a bit like 'mainstreaming', or being institutionalized. The process of development of the Subject is a striving to transform the Object according to its own image, but in the process the Subject itself is changed and in the process of objectification becomes a part of the living whole of the community.

"The unity of Subject and Object, the third and last grade of the Doctrine of the Notion, is the Idea. The Idea can be understood as the whole community as an intelligible whole, it is the summation of the pure essentialities of a complete historical form of life. It is the logical representation of Spirit, or of the development and life of an entire community, in the form of a concrete concept.

"So the starting point of a science is the Notion which forms the subject of the science, not Being. This is worth mentioning because there is a widespread fallacy about the relation between Marx's Capital and Hegel's Logic. Some writers have put Capital up against the Logic, and in an effort to match them, start by equating the

commodity relation with Being, on the basis that the commodity relation is the “simplest relation” or on the basis that the commodity relation is immediate. But the first thing to be done in a science, according to Hegel (and Marx followed Hegel in this), is to form a Notion of the subject, the simplest possible relation whose unfolding produces the relevant science. In the case of Capital, this abstract notion, the germ of capital, is the commodity relation. In the case of the Philosophy of Right, it was the relation of Abstract Right, that is private property. The problem of the origins of value or of the commodity relation is a different question, and Marx demonstrates his familiarity with the Doctrine of Essence in the third section of Chapter One, where the money-form is shown to emerge out of a series of relations constituting historically articulated resolutions of the problem of realizing an expanded division of labour.”

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Hegel's Logic - Being, Essence and Notion, 2007, Blunden.](#)
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